

NEWS RELEASE

USDA, FSA Santa Barbara / Ventura County Office, 920 East Stowell Road Santa Maria, CA
93454

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 1, 2005

Contact: Rupert J. Butler
(805) 928-9269 Ext. 112

FLOOD ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR QUALIFYING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

Santa Maria, CA March 1, 2005 – Farm Service Agency County Executive Director, Rupert J. Butler announced today that flood assistance is available to qualifying agricultural producers in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

The recent rain events of 2005 have caused severe damage in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Farms and ranches suffering severe damage may be eligible for assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) administered by the Santa Barbara / Ventura Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Office if the damage:

- Will be so costly to rehabilitate that Federal assistance is or will be needed to return the land to productive agricultural use
- Is unusual and is not the type that would recur frequently in the same area
- Affect the productive capacity of the farmland
- Will impair or endanger the land

A producer qualifying for ECP assistance may receive cost-share levels not to exceed 75% percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures. No producer is eligible for more than \$200,000 cost sharing per natural disaster occurrence. There is also a minimum of \$1,000 in damage. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- Removing debris from farmland
- Grading, shaping, or releveling severely damaged farmland
- Restoring permanent fences for inclusion or exclusion of livestock
- Restoring conservation structures and other similar installations.

Producers who have suffered a loss from this natural disaster may contact the local FSA County Office and request assistance from March 1, 2005 to April 29, 2005.

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- An application for cost-share assistance has been filed
- The local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- An Agency responsible for the technical assistance, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), has made a needs determination, which may include cubic yards of earthmoving, etc. required for rehabilitation.

For more information call the FSA Office at (805) 928-9269 or look online at: www.fsa.usda.gov under fact sheets for the Emergency Conservation Program.